

Letter from Taizé

BIMONTHLY 3.50 FF

December 1988 – January 1989 / 6

pages 4 and 7

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Madras

from 27 to 31 December 1988

The intercontinental meeting will be more for the Asian countries, but several hundred young Europeans will also participate.

Paris

from 30 December 1988

to 4 January 1989

To prepare oneself for the European meeting, the previous Letter suggested themes for reflexion. In this Letter, you can find a plan for a prayer (page 2) which may be used especially in the time before Christmas. The preparation continues in the region around Paris.

Hungary

28 April to 1 March 1989

Taizé has been invited to prepare an East-West European meeting for young people in Pecs, in the south of Hungary, which will take place from 28 April to 1 May 1989. Youth will be welcomed by the parishes and will come together for common prayer in the churches of the town. This is the first time that such an East-West meeting is taking place in Hungary.

Pilgrims on the Earth

INVITED BY
EUROPEAN PARISHES,
YOUNG PEOPLE
ACROSS THE OCEANS
(see page 7)

THEY SHARE
THEIR EXPERIENCES
WEEK AFTER WEEK
IN TAIZÉ

One of the important things for me in my stay in Taizé is to be confirmed in my commitment at home in Chile. Of course, I sometimes think that I could do more and be stronger, but in the meetings with young Europeans I've understood that what I am already doing is in itself an important commitment. In fact, I have discovered the strength I need to continue my work in Chile.

Our struggle at the moment is to rid Chilean society of hatred and of violations of human rights. This work needs to be done publicly so that people become aware of it and find the road to inner change as well. We cannot simply denounce all that is harmful to life, we must also proclaim the values which will make it possible to build a new reality in Chile.

The Church's teaching reminds us to "opt for the poor", of the need to turn the economy to serve ends of human solidarity, and, as the pope said when he came to Chile, that "love is strongest", and that "we are the young people of today, not of tomorrow".

Speaking with people from other continents, for example with Europeans, I have understood the importance of our people's values — of our traditions of joy and hope even in the midst of a very hard economic and political situation.

For me, that is the challenge of this pilgrimage of trust across the earth which is making it possible to share the best things present in different peoples."

RAIMUNDO, from CHILE



"Taizé" means "time" to me. I explored "to be" here. I discovered:

- a time to wonder and be astonished. Incredible that I am, and here! A time to watch myself and my thoughts. Sometimes the silence in the church deafened me. A time to wonder at the thirst of so many people who come to the hill to watch and pray, responding to an invitation from within.

- a time to live each day as God's today and stop planning my life and everybody else's. A time to be simple and shed all the unnecessary accumulated burden of so many years.

- a time to hear beneath the noise of so many tongues, strident human voices in quest of the same thing. A time to look at and appreciate youth and aliveness in other people and myself.

- a time to discover that "differences" all over the world are a matter of degree. A time to know and feel the pain of my longing and accept that God truly loves me. A time to love and forgive. A time to stand on the hill and applaud as a red sun burns away a hot summer's day.

Two months is a long time to live. I've mellowed and changed, sounding deeper depths than I've ever known.

SUSAN, from BOMBAY

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FEB 23 1989

YOUTH
FROM THE
SOUTHERN CONTINENTS
KNOW HOW TO SHARE
THE SPIRIT
OF FESTIVITY
WHICH LIVES
IN THEIR PEOPLES:
PAINTINGS FROM
CHILE AND INDIA.



**"Rise up
and walk"**

Vigil of pilgrimage

*Setting out as pilgrims means turning
towards what is before us in prayerful
expectation.*

*The texts that follow remind us of the
pilgrims before us who waited upon Christ,
for their people and for their world.*

*One can either use just some of the
elements given here, or else use all in a
long prayer – perhaps a night vigil: the
night was particularly chosen by early
Christians as a time for prayer.*

Introduction

Song (for example, Veni Creator Spiritus)

Psalm 84 (with Alleluia sung after each verse)

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O lord, God Almighty!
My soul is longing and yearning
for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my being ring out their joy
to you, the living God.

Even the sparrow has found a home
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altar, Almighty God,
my King and my God.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house
forever singing your praise,
blessed are they whose strength is in you
and who seek out your roads.

They pass through the valley of tears
and they make it a place of springs;
with gathering strength they walk,
in Zion they will see their God.

Prayer:

Lord Christ, at times we are like strangers on this
earth, disconcerted by all the violence and harsh
oppositions. Like a gentle breeze, you breathe
upon us the Spirit of peace. Transfigure the deserts
of our doubts and so prepare us to be bearers of
reconciliation wherever you place us, until a hope
of peace arises in our world. (Prayer by Brother Roger)

Song (for example, Da pacem Domine in diebus nostris)

First stage:

The hope of the people of God

The Lord consoles his people and all the ends of
the earth shall see the salvation of God. (Is. 52. 9-10)

Song (for example, Bonum est confidere)

Prayer

For those in exile, for those who live in poverty or
under the threat of famine, Lord, we pray.

Let us pray for the people of South Africa, or
Ethiopia and all of Africa.

Reading

The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon the Messiah;
the spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit
of counsel and of strength, the Spirit of knowledge
and reverence of the Lord. He will not judge by
what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he
hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will
judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions
for the poor of the earth.

Period of Silence

Song (for example, Confitemini Domino)

Second stage: **Mary and Joseph**

Blessed is she who believed in the fulfilment of all
that the Lord promised her. (Lk. 1.45)

Song (for example, O Lord, hear my prayer)

Prayer

For the Church to become a leaven of communion
in the midst of humanity, open to all, Lord, we pray.
For those who are persecuted because of their
faith, Lord, we pray.

Let us pray for the people of Haiti, and of South
and North America.

Reading

The Angel said to Joseph: "Mary will give birth to a
son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, be-
cause he will save his people from their sin." All
this took place to fulfil what the Lord said through
the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will
give birth to a son, and they will call him Em-
manuel, which means God with us." (Mt. 1.21-23)

Period of silence

Song (for example, Misericordias Domini)

Third stage: John the Baptist

A voice calls in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him. (Mk; 1.3)

Song (for example, In the Lord I'll be ever thankful)

Prayer

For those who give their lives to serve the poor and excluded, and who work for justice and reconciliation in our society, Lord, we pray.

For those who have been living in loneliness or who have been forsaken by those close to them, Lord, we pray.

Let us pray for the people of both Western and Eastern Europe.

Reading

John the Baptist came, baptizing in the desert and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mk. 1.4, 6-8)

Period of silence

Song (for example, wait for the Lord)

Fourth stage: Anne and Simeon

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people. (Lk. 2.29-32)

Song (for example, In our darkness)

Prayer

For those who consecrate their lives to God in lifelong fidelity, and for those who are seeking their vocation, Lord, we pray.

Let us pray for the people of Asia and the Pacific.

Reading

The prophetess Anna was very old. She never left the temple but served God night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them, she gave thanks to God and spoke child Jesus to all who were looking forward to redemption. (Lk. 2.36-38)

Period of Silence

Song (for example, Exaltabo te, Deus meus)

Fifth Stage: The pilgrim Church

We are but strangers and pilgrims in your sight, Lord. Our days on earth are like a shadow. (1 Ch. 29.15)

Song (for example, De noche iremos)

Prayer

For all believers, for those who wait in hope on God, may they work together for justice and peace in the world.

Let us pray for the people of the Middle East and for all who are working for reconciliation there.

Reading

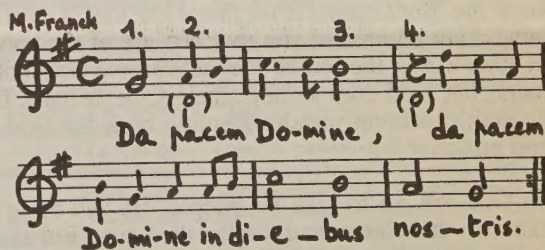
Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witness, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12.1-2)

Period of Silence

The Lord's prayer

Song (for example, Laudate omnes gentes)

DA PACEM DOMINE IN DIEBUS NOSTRIS



Lord, grant us peace in our days.

"Lord, teach us to pray"

The opening words of the Our Father (see previous Letter) are followed by a series of requests. If God is our "Abba", who loves us and is very close to us, why is it necessary to ask him anything? Isn't it superfluous?

Speaking to the disciples about prayer, Jesus tells them, using the picture of a human father: "Ask, and [God] will give it to you" (Luke 11.9 ff). To ask is not a sign of doubt but on the contrary an expression of trust and filial liberty.

"Hallowed be your Name"

The request "hallowed be your Name" is probably the most difficult to understand. It is biblical language very different from our own. Firstly, we need to understand what a name signifies in the Bible. It is never simply a word or a label, as so often for us. A name is part and parcel of the reality of a person or thing. It reveals their secret, manifests their identity.

For this reason, when in the Bible a man or woman meets God, it sometimes happens that they receive a new name. Their life has been transformed and thus they have received a new identity. In the same way, God's name is not just a word, it is God himself who reveals himself to human beings; God turned towards his people. He makes himself accessible by telling his people what to call him.

Several centuries before Christ, the prophet Ezekiel gave what is really the best commentary on this phrase of the Our Father (Ez 36.20-28). The prophet carries out his mission in Babylon during the time of exile. It is a difficult time when, so to speak, Israel no longer exists as a nation.

Because of your unfaithfulness and the ensuing political disaster, the Lord says through his prophet, you have profaned my Name, since it is through you that the nations should learn to know me. But I cannot leave things like that; I must do something, "not because of you, but because of my holy Name". In other words, the people does not deserve God looking after them, but God does so nevertheless, he remains faithful to himself, consistent with his identity: he is the God of mercy and justice.

So God will act to save his people. He will bring back the exiles to their home and forgive their sins. But the prophet knows this will not solve the problem at its root, for what is there to stop the people forgetting the Lord again? He presages a time when God will change his people from within, transforming their hearts of stone into hearts of flesh and placing his Spirit deep within the human being (Ez 36.26-27). Then the people will really be able to hallow God's name and live in such a way that God's identity be manifested.

The early Christians saw the fulfilment of this prophecy in the life of Christ. First of all, Jesus is the "one who comes in the Name of the Lord" (Mark 11.9).

He reveals God's true identity and makes his real Name known, teaching us to call him "Father". More than just that word, it is the whole of Jesus' life, especially his death and resurrection, that bears witness to a boundless love and replies to the question, "Who is God?". At the end of St. John's Gospel, Jesus sums up his mission as revealing God's name, making God's name known (John 17.6,26).

When we pray "hallowed be your Name", we are asking God to make it possible for all humanity to know his real identity. We are praying for all to see God as the source of trust and love. By this prayer then, we want to open up the new relationship we have with God through Christ and his Spirit to the whole of creation. And, becoming aware that we have become bearers of this Name, we ask God to make himself known to others through our life.



Paris: There are now nearly 400 churches in Paris and surrounding region getting ready to welcome people for the next European Meeting. These weeks, we are getting to know more and more people and groups who bear witness to the vitality of Christian communities even in the most difficult situations. In such a large

conurbation the anonymity gives rise to loneliness and fear for many people. So Christian communities in Evry, for example, have arranged a place of welcome in the middle of the commercial centre of a new town.

A great number of persons from other continents live in the Paris region. How can ways be found to build the contact and community between groups of different cultures in places where people so often feel excluded or disregarded?

Those who are working to prepare the European Meeting are discovering a solidarity which expresses itself in many ways: aid to countries in need, a group that works against torture, immediate help or those in difficulty — from children with problems at school to elderly people to visit.

There are groups that meet every Saturday morning to help lead a Eucharist in a prison and to meet the prisoners afterwards. There are others that staff centres for the homeless, and a "food bank" to help those who do not have enough food. Self-help associations are being formed to help unemployed people retrain. Several groups are preparing Christmas celebrations for the homeless.

The time of preparation for the meeting has been a time of deepening communion. This has come about by the multitude of visits made, local meetings, gatherings in chaplaincies, contacts with churches of different denominations and with religious communities.

hannine ours

in 14.1-6

hannine hours are suggested as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer, in the midst of our life at home. During the course of the day (if possible, two days in the same week) take a couple of hours to read the Bible passages and the short commentary which follow. Afterwards, the group (3 to 10 people) meet together to share what they have discovered and perhaps a time of prayer.

The Gospel picks out the sombre realism of St. Thomas the Apostle: more quickly than any of the other disciples, he understood the seriousness of the threat hanging over Jesus. In the conspiracies being hatched against Christ he and the swiftly advancing shadow of death. Thus when Jesus announces he will return to Jerusalem, Thomas, farseeing as all as courageous, cries out: "Let us also go and die with him!" (John 14.5). What path can there be between the realities of death and life? Thomas sees none (Jn 14.5). And it is not surprising that, after the resurrection, it is he who needs to see and touch to believe (Jn 20.25).

To believe! It is this verb Thomas comes up against. At the beginning of chapter 14, Jesus uses expressions of great simplicity to invite his disciples to trust. Could he have forgotten the terrible fate awaiting him? The unbearable gap between the anguish of the disciples and Jesus' candour makes Thomas cry out in reproach: "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Is a man of realism, Thomas discerned no way, there where Jesus was announcing one. He saw only death. Our questionings, though they are not directly linked to Jesus' death, are not so very different from Thomas'. We do not want to be naive. As we search for meaning to life, to the world, to events, we come up against suffering and evil, and we wonder: is there a way through it all? We would like to find an answer to evil, to be able to see and touch the way. And now the Gospel asks us to start all to believe. Not to take the way from realism, but to make this realism develop until it discerns in the concrete situations of the world, with all its suffering, the presence of One who is alive.

Can trust help me to enter more fully into my own reality? What things are a support to me in the struggle to believe?

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

1 SUN

Col 3.12-17
Lk 2.41-52

If you want to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Be sincere of heart and steadfast. Do not be alarmed by adversity, but attach yourself to the Lord and do not leave him.

Si 2.1-6

2 Mon

Lm 2.22-24,26
Jn 14.1-3

Paul writes: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

Ga 2.19-20

3 Tue

Is 54.4-5,10
Mk 3.31-35

This is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son for the forgiveness of our sins.

1 Jn 4.10-11

4 Wed

Mi 6.6-8
Mt 5.3-10

Who could condemn us? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God, interceding for us.

Rm 8.31-39

5 Thu

Gn 1.1-5
Jude 20-21,24-25

John the Baptist came as is written in the book of Isaiah: A voice of one who cries in the desert, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make straight his paths!"

Lk 3.1-6

6 Fri

Is 60.1-6
Ep 3.2-6

EPIPHANY

When they saw the star, the wise men were filled with a great joy. As they entered, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they knelt down and worshipped him.

Mt 2.1-12

7 Sat

Gn 1.26-27

John the Baptist said to the people: Anyone who has two tunics must share with the one who has none. And anyone with something to eat must do the same.

Lk 3.7-14

8 SUN

Ac 10.34-38
Lk 3.15-22

The Lord says: My servant does not cry out or raise his voice. Faithfully he will present what is just; he will not falter or be discouraged until he has established justice on the earth.

Is 42.1-7

9 Mon

Gn 1.31-2.3
Rm 1.1-7

Jesus said to the tempter: It is written: "Worship the Lord your God, him alone must you serve."

Lk 4.1-13

10 Tue

Gn 2.4-7
Lk 4.14-22

Paul writes: The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith.

Rm 1.8-17

Meditating on the Word

11 Wed

Gn 8.1-12 Lk 4.22-30
Rm 2.13-15

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in time of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, Lord. For you never forsake those who seek you.

Ps 9

12 Thu

Gn 9.11-16
Rm 4.1-8

Jesus said: I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because that is why I was sent.

Lk 4.38-44

13 Fri

Gn 12.1-7
Rm 4.17-25

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." "Master," Simon replied, "we have worked hard all night long without catching anything, but because you say so I will let down the nets."

Lk 5.1-11

14 Sat

Gn 13.1-18

Large crowds gathered to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Lk 5.12-16

15 SUN

1 Co 12.4-11
Jn 2.1-12

Isaiah said: For the sake of my people, I shall not keep silent. I shall not rest until her justice shines out like the breaking of day. And then all will see your justice, and you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.

Is 62.1-5

16 Mon

Gn 15.1-6
Lk 5.17-26

We are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through him, by faith, that we now stand in God's grace.

Rm 5.1-5

17 Tue

Gn 18.1-15
Rm 5.6-11

Jesus said: It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Lk 5.27-32

18 Wed

Rm 5.15-21
Lk 5.33-39

The Lord says: I am with you, I will watch over you wherever you go. I will not abandon you before accomplishing what I have promised you.

Gn 28.12-17

19 Thu

Gn 32.23-31
Lk 6.1-11

Buried with Christ in baptism, we live a new life with him.

Rm 6.4-6

20 Fri

Rm 6.8-14
Lk 6.12-19

Joseph forgave his brothers saying: Do not be afraid; it is for me to put myself in God's place? The harm you planned to do me has, by God's design, been turned to good.

Gn 50.15-21

January

21 Sat

Ws 1.1-5

Looking at his disciples, Jesus said: Happy are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.

Lk 6.20-23

22 SUN

1 Co 12.12-30
Lk 4.14-21

Do not be sad or afflicted: God's joy is your strength.

Ne 8.3,8-10

23 Mon

Ws 1.7,12-15
Lk 6.27-35

Now you are set free from sin and in the service of God, you will gain the holiness that leads to eternal life.

Rm 6.22-23, 7.4-6

24 Tue

Ws 2.23, 3.1-5
Rm 8.1-4

Jesus said: Give, and it will be given to you. A full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure used for you.

Lk 6.36-38

25 Wed

Rm 8.5-11
Lk 6.39-45

Like gold tested in a furnace, God purifies those who love him. Those who are faithful to him will dwell with him in love.

Ws 3.5b-9

26 Thu

Ws 5.15-16
Rm 8.14-17

Jesus said: Whoever comes to me, listens to my words and acts on them is like someone building a house who digs down deep and lays the foundations on rock.

Lk 6.46-49

27 Fri

Ws 6.10-16
Lk 7.1-10

Paul writes: We look towards our salvation in hope. Now, to hope for what we see is not hope at all. To hope for what we do not see means to await it with constancy.

Rm 8.18-25

28 Sat

Ws 7.7-10,15-16
Lk 7.11-17

You hear the desire of the humble, Lord, you encourage them and listen to their cry.

Ps 10

29 SUN

Jr 1.4-5,17-19
Lk 4.21-30

Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous, boastful or conceited. Love does not seek its own advantage, it does not take offence or harbour grievances. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

1 Co 12.31-13.13

30 Mon

Ws 7.21-26
Lk 7.18-23

In all things God works for the good of those who love him, those who have been called according to his purpose.

Rm 8.26-30

31 Tue

Rm 8.31-39
Lk 7.24-28

God's wisdom renews the universe. From one generation to another she passes into souls to make them friends of God.

Ws 7.27-8.1

Meditating on the Word

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

February

**Johannine
hours**
Matthew 14.22-23

1 Wed

Ws 8.21-9.5
Lk 7.36-50

Paul writes: There is no difference between persons: all have the same Lord, who generously blesses all who call on him.

Rm 10.8-13

2 Thu

MI 3.1-4
Heb 2.14-18

PRESENTATION OF THE LORD
When Simeon saw the child Jesus, he praised God and said: Now, Lord, you can let your servant depart in peace as you promised. For my eyes have seen the salvation you have prepared for all people to see.

Lk 2.22-40

3 Fri

Ws 9.11-18
Lk 8.1-8

Paul writes: God never revokes his gifts or his call.

Rm 11.29-36

4 Sat

Lk 8.11-15

You are merciful to all, Lord, because you are almighty. You overlook people's sins so that they can repent. Yes, you love everything that exists.

Ws 11.22-12.2

5 SUN

1 Co 15.1-11
Lk 5.1-11

Isaiah heard an angel of the Lord tell him: Your guilt has been removed, your sin forgiven.

Is 6.1-8

6 Mon

Jb 1.20-22
Lk 8.1-17

Do not model yourselves on the pattern of this world, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern the will of God.

Rm 12.1-5

7 Tue

Jb 2.1-10
Lk 8.19-21

Be joyful in your hope, steadfast in hardship, faithful in prayer. Be always ready to offer hospitality.

Rm 12.6-13

8 Wed

Jl 2.12-13
2 Co 5.20-6.2

ASH WEDNESDAY
Jesus said: When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your generosity is secret. And your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

Mt 6.1-6,16-18

9 Thu

Jb 6.11-21
Lk 8.22-25

Do not repay evil with evil. Seek to do what is regarded as good by all. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Rm 12.14-21

10 Fri

Jb 12.4-5, 13.1-8
Lk 8.38-42

All the commandments can be summed up in this: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Rm 13.8-10

11 Sat

Jb 14.13-17

Jesus said to the woman he had healed: Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace.

Lk 8.43-48

12 SUN

Dt 26.4-10
Lk 4.1-13

The Word of God is very near you, it is on your lips and in your heart.

Rm 10.8-13

13 Mon

Jb 16.16-22
Lk 8.49-56

Paul writes: Let us put aside the deeds of darkness. Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rm 13.11-14

14 Tue

Rm 14.1-17
Lk 9.1-6

Job said: I know that my redeemer lives. From my flesh I shall look on God, and the one on whom I look will be no stranger.

Jb 19.23-27

15 Wed

Jb 23.3-12
Lk 9.10-17

May the God of perseverance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves following the example of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and one voice you may glorify God.

Rm 15.1-6

16 Thu

Jb 28.12-28
Rm 15.7-13

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Lk 9.18-22

17 Fri

Jb 42.1-5
Rm 16.25-27

Jesus said: Whoever wants to be a follower of mine must renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Lk 9.23-27

18 Sat

Jr 7.22-25

Jesus said: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

Mt 5.43-48

19 SUN

Gn 15.5-6 Ph 3.17-4.1
Lk 9.28-36

Lord, you teach me the way of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.

Ps 16

20 Mon

Jr 8.4-7
Lk 9.37-45

Paul writes: May our fellowship in faith lead you to full knowledge of all the good we can accomplish for Christ.

Phm 4-6

21 Tue

Jr 8.18-23
Heb 1.1-3

Jesus said: Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.

Lk 9.46-50

22 Wed

Jr 9.22-23
Heb 2.10-18

Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Lk 9.51-62

23 Thu

Heb 3.5-14
Lk 10.1-3

Jeremiah said: You know me, Lord, and you see me. You know that my heart is with you.

Jr 11.19, 12.1-3

24 Fri

Jr 14.7-9
Lk 10.4-11,16

Jesus is well able to understand our weakness. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet was without sin. So let us approach God with confidence, to receive his forgiveness and his love.

Heb 4.12-16

25 Sat

Jr 14.19-22

Jesus said: I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever, and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

Lk 10.17-22

26 SUN

1 Co 10.1-12 Lk 13.6-9
Ex 3.1-15

You are my lamp, Lord; you light up my darkness. With you I push through the barriers, with my God I leap the wall.

Ps 18

27 Mon

Jr 15.11-21
Heb 5.5-9

Turning to his disciples, Jesus said: Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!

Lk 10.23-28

28 Tue

Jr 17.5-8
Lk 10.29-37

God has given us great encouragement to grasp the hope that is held out to us. It is an anchor for our souls.

Heb 6.10-20

For the people of the Bible the sea is often a symbol of the power of death or of the forces of chaos in the world. To show Jesus walking upon the sea expresses that he has overcome death and the chaos in the world. It reveals his identity as the Risen One. Is it possible, in this world, to share in Christ's life and all it represents? Such appears to be Peter's desire, and to this desire Jesus replied simply: "Come" (v29) — just one word to say that the way is open, accessible for all who want to follow him.

Entering now into the life of resurrection signifies entering into something radically new. No previous experience can used as a reference. It is the life of trust in God. Affirming that Jesus has overcome death and the forces of chaos does not rest on evidence. Do we see it in the world? So many things would incline us to believe the contrary — war, hate, blind violence, evil in all its forms — only eyes fixed on Christ are able to discern this truth.

Peter starts to sink the moment his eyes look away from Christ and see the strength of the wind as the height of the waves. Fear grips him. But when Peter sinks down to the sea crying out, "Lord, save me!" the Gospel tells us an important fact. Not so much a heroic act by Peter, rather an act of Christ. "Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him." What can we learn from this? First of all, this: every commitment to follow Christ relies not on our strength, but on Christ's faithfulness, who rescued Peter when his faith gave way. If Christ asks us a question when we want to go with him in his life of resurrection, the question he asks is not: "Are you sure of your strength, are you sure you have enough faith?" It is a quite different question that we are asked, one much less centred on ourselves: "Do you believe I will be at your side? Do you believe in my faithfulness?"

How can we come to realise more clearly that our commitments, especially a lifelong commitment in the name of Christ, rests on God's faithfulness? What helps me to look towards Christ?

Strangers and pilgrims on the earth"

"strangers and pilgrims on the earth", thus the author of the Letter to the Hebrews designates the witnesses of faith before the time of Christ. This text comes to mind when one thinks of the hundreds of young people from other continents who came to Taizé this year. They have come from 60 different countries, in winter as well as in summer. They have lived as pilgrims in Europe for several weeks. After taking part in the intercontinental meetings at Taizé, they have been visiting parishes, chaplaincies and groups throughout Europe: from small mountain villages in France and Italy, to cities like Hamburg, Bristol... and they have been to parishes in Yugoslavia too. These parishes tried to welcome them quite simply. Despite difficulties of language and the difference of culture, the pilgrims have been able to understand in depth many realities of life and Christian commitment in Europe. Here are some of the things they have said:

"The parish visit was one of the most beautiful times of my life. It gave me the experience of social and family life in Europe. The thing that struck me was that most of the young people keep separate from their parents, depriving them of love and God's guidance. When they grow up, they seek for security and identity and when they see their wish is not granted, they turn their backs to the family, Church, and God. Many parents and young people are busy assembling money. But I am sure deep down in their hearts they are spiritual and love God."

JUDITH from INDIA

"My stay in Fribourg, Switzerland, was good. I was able to have a lot of contact with the pupils at the secondary school, and I also went to the prison, above all to visit young black people who have been there for several years. I got to know a group of university students who meet every Wednesday morning for a prayer in the chaplaincy. Nearly all of them go to the prison regularly and help the protestant chaplain there with the Sunday service which is always followed by an hour of meeting with the prisoners."

LEON, from ZAIRE

"After spending a few weeks in Taizé, I was anxious to go on a parish visit to see and experience what life would be like living with families as part of their daily life, to meet young people who may not have been to Taizé or who may not be Christians, to share with them my experience as a young Christian, as an Indian and to listen to them. When we started off for Belgium, I was a bit preoccupied and a bit worried if we'd reach safely. But of course we were warmly welcomed by the family we lived with for a week. The two weeks spent taught me a lot because it was a rare combination. The first week we visited schools and spoke to young people in the classes and groups. The questions were interesting, honest and varied. I think there was a lot of openness and acceptance of views. I began to see a number of things from a new perspective, especially the family life in Europe, the role of a young person in the Christian community both in India and in Europe. I learnt to appreciate the simple Indian faith from what the young people shared. In the second week, like the young people we met the first week who were educated and able to express themselves and question even God, we visited homes for the mentally handicapped and psychiatric hospitals."

This was a very beautiful experience, an experience which has touched me deeply and opened my eyes and my heart to many realities, and a deeper sense of God's love."

Meeting these people, working with them, praying and singing with them and even being loved and accepted with kisses and hugs made me feel and sense a little of their pain, and I was able to respond to their love. Through them I see a ray of hope for us who are able-bodied and fortunate, to understand God's love for each one, a hope that someday the world will be a better place with God as the centre of our lives."

BLOSSOM, from INDIA

Invitations to young pilgrims from southern continents will continue. Some parishes are getting ready to welcome people coming from other continents for the European Meeting in Paris. Later on, other young adults will be coming: they will be chosen and sent by those responsible for youth work in the Church in their country. Groups in Europe are finding imaginative ways to make it possible for them to come. It is not easy to gather the funds necessary to pay an air ticket. This sign of sharing is a first step on a pilgrimage of trust: preparing to welcome someone who is, as yet, unknown to us. And this gesture answers that of those who accept to come as "strangers and pilgrims".



Madras: The Madras meeting is approaching. It is being prepared for not only in the parishes of Madras which are going to welcome participants but also throughout India. The government is granting a 50% reduction to the young people who will go to the meeting by train. The meeting will bring together young people from

different countries and will also allow young Christians from all over India to discover one another. Before the meeting, preparatory gatherings are being held in every region of India. In particular, there has been a gathering to prepare the small group meetings for Madras. One of the participants explains:

"The animators' meeting was held at Roukela, Orissa, in October, with young people from Bihar, Rajaganour, Roukela, and Lucknow. There were twenty persons. We found some had already been to Taizé. We told each other about our life. Some are quite active in the social services to the rural area. Some are active in the youth groups of their parishes. The first session began with morning prayer then a bible introduction. We then went on to share ideas about the role of the animator; this awakened each person to the importance of the role of the animator: someone who gives life to the group. Aware of the topic and of the time available, the animator encourages the members of the group to share their life experience by giving examples. The animator is not supposed to be a counsellor or teacher. We then divided into three groups, which first spent a few minutes in quiet, reading the texts that had been given. The groups spoke in English or in Hindi."

The session the next day began with an open-air Eucharist celebrated by the bishop. As it was Mission Sunday, a big group of Adivasi pilgrims came. The altar and the Cathedral compound was decorated with many flowers. The people offered their products from the field, such as rice, grains, flowers, etc. during the Offertory."



Listening to the CONTINENTS

South America

Two young Germans were in South America this summer. Here is some of their story:

"We spent 3 months in Peru and Bolivia. What discoveries we made in the first couple of weeks! It took time to understand the hopes of the people we were meeting. We were often asked to speak about life in Europe too; and we explained that life is not all easy here either.

The days we spent in a parish in Oruro were among the most remarkable: the organization of the groups of young people, the shanty town areas, the mine, and, above all, the parish house with its open door.

At the end of our stay we met two young people from Lima who had spent 2 months at Taizé during the summer. They had come back full of joy and with the same enthusiasm for continuing their involvement. They managed to find ways to share what they had discovered with their parish.

For example, on the eve of the plebiscite in Chile they held a prayer vigil. It was a surprise to see so many Peruvians come to take part because, for historical reasons, there is quite a mistrust between some nations of South America. For them, the meetings at Taizé meant not just a closer link with the people of other continents, but also with the people of neighbouring countries!" ■

Yugoslavia

When, coming from Western Europe by train, you get out for the first time in Belgrade you are surprised to discover the slightly Oriental atmosphere in which the city bathes. Something unusual and enticing for the Westerner floats in the air: Serbia is a land where East meets West.

My journey allowed me to discover the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the conversations I had with Christians I several times heard the moving story of those of the older generation: many have given their lives to keep their faith.

This Church is characterised by a great inward strength that comes from the faith of its martyrs. At the same time the Church is also deeply marked by its wounds.

Scattered along a chain of hills between Belgrade and Novi Sad, over a dozen small monasteries nestle between the fields and the forest. Each summer, for several years, it is in one of these monasteries that a number of young people and adults have met for a week. The only monk in the monastery, helped by some sisters, welcomes the young people with both love and joy.

Priests from the neighbourhood, bishops, theological students and teachers come to make it possible for the daily liturgy to be celebrated. They also lead the bible studies. Everyone takes part eagerly in the small discussion groups, asking questions and sharing his or her own experience.

If, because of the language difficulty, I was unable to understand everything, I was nevertheless able to understand the driving force of these Christians: they want to draw upon the great treasure of tradition of their Church, of which the ancient frescoes decorating the monasteries allow you to glimpse a little. They want to remain faithful to the faith of those who have gone before them and also to be witnesses of faith in the world today.

These people in Serbia are confronted by the same questions which face Christians in every big city throughout the world. How can the faith live in the huge tower blocks of Novi Beograd where there is not one single church?

I went to the homes of several young people. They live along endlessly long roads where each house looks alike. Their tiny flats are secret shelters in an anonymous universe. As my guide arrived at his home, he lit the oil lamp before the icons, kissed each of them, then welcomed me in royal manner.

Such warmth of welcome warms the heart and I realized that communion shared with him was also communion with his Church. How much peace and hope shine in such homes! They show other people the way to find peace and hope in their turn. ■

Italy

"Being pilgrims of listening, of prayer welcome. These are the three themes we have adopted, in Turin, in order to prepare for the meetings in Madras and Paris.

As «pilgrims of listening» we shall be welcomed by a parish. The Word of God proclaimed there, shared, reflected upon as a nourishment for our daily life. He does the Word of God made flesh, Christ become the Word who supports us, who walks with us and gives meaning to our journeys to Madras or Paris and our return home?

As «pilgrims of prayer», we shall be going to share the prayer and a meeting with the Carmelite sisters in our town. How do they live as pilgrims, in their contemplative vocation, and how does their pilgrimage touch that of the Church and the whole family of humanity?

As «pilgrims of welcome», we shall visit a community that welcomes the homeless and those without a family. There it will be important for us to learn how to let ourselves be welcomed, to open our eyes as to discover, in the midst of loneliness and distress, all the signs of hope there are.

This last meeting, a few days before Christmas, will help us become more aware of Jesus, born as one who is poor among the poor."

Letter from Taizé

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Letter 143 · DRA Comm. de Taizé · Com. par. 50795 · DL
Les Presses de Taizé

